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# FOXHOLE GLORY





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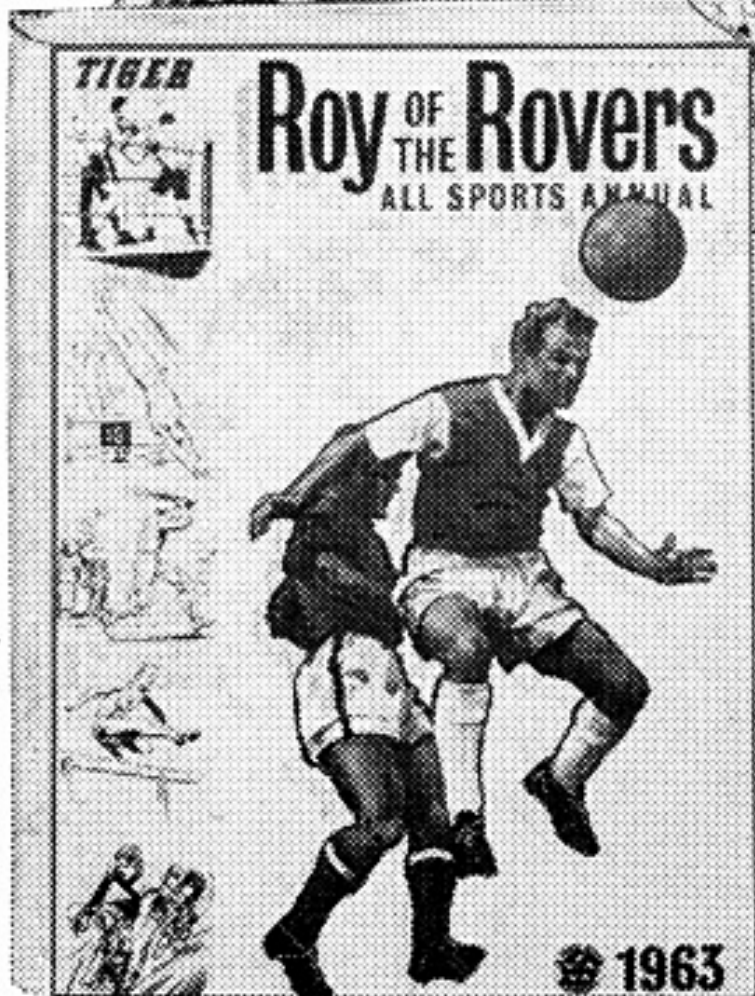
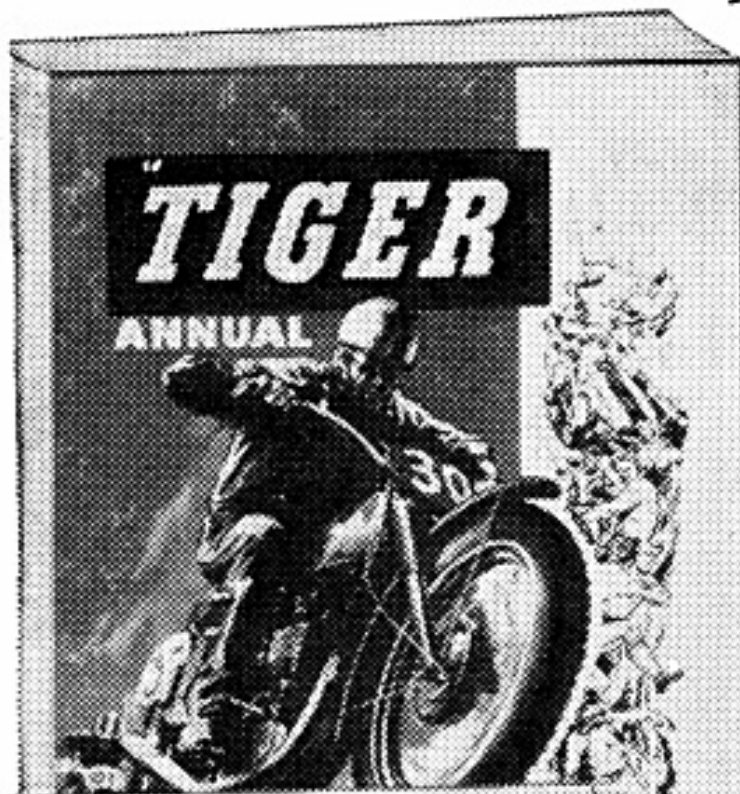
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# FOXHOLE GLORY

SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE FRONTS OF WORLD WAR TWO -- FIGHTING LIKE SNAPPING TERRIERS ALONGSIDE THEIR BIGGER BROTHERS -- WERE BRITAIN'S 'LITTLE REGIMENTS' ... SMALL, BUT INTENSELY PROUD COUNTY UNITS, STEEPED IN TRADITION AND RICH WITH BATTLE-HONOURS WON IN BYGONE WARS.

THIS IS THE STORY OF ONE OF THESE REGIMENTS, THE RAYNSHIRE RIFLES ...



... AND OF THE MAN WHO INSPIRED THIS REGIMENT TO ITS GREATEST GLORY--A CIVILIAN, A WAR CORRESPONDENT NAMED JERRY BELLAMY.



# Chapter 1. Desert Assignment

DECEMBER, 1940. THE STORY BEGINS IN THE NEWSROOM OF A LONDON NEWSPAPER.

HEY, JERRY... PHONE CALL FOR YOU! A CAPTAIN RICHARDS...

IT'S MIKE! THAT'S WONDERFUL!



YOU'RE ON *LEAVE*, MIKE? OF COURSE, I CAN GET AWAY FROM HERE... I'LL SEE YOU IN TEN MINUTES!

JERRY'S GOT A COUPLE OF STORIES TO WRITE... BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN A THING TO THE RAYNSHIRE RIFLES' MOST ARDENT NON-MEMBER!





AND TEN MINUTES LATER, JERRY WAS EAGERLY DISCUSSING THE REGIMENT WITH HIS CLOSE FRIEND SINCE SCHOOL DAYS... MIKE RICHARDS.

YES, WE'RE ALL ON LEAVE... EVERY MAN IN THE RAYNSHIRE! IT'S EMBARKATION LEAVE ALL RIGHT, JERRY!

TEN TO ONE IT'LL BE THE WESTERN DESERT. I KNOW WE'RE HITTING THE ITALIANS HARD OUT THERE.

BUT THE GERMANS ARE STARTING TO LAND IN TRIPOLI. THINGS ARE GOING TO GET STICKIER IN LIBYA, I'M SURE OF IT!



MIKE RICHARDS SMILED AT THE SUDDEN DEJECTION IN JERRY'S EYES...

CHEER UP, PAL... WE CAN'T ALL GO WHERE THE FIGHTING IS! SOMEONE HAS TO STAY IN ENGLAND! AND NEWSPAPERS ARE MORE ESSENTIAL NOW THAN THEY EVER WERE! YOURS IS AN IMPORTANT JOB!

I'D SWAP WITH YOU, MIKE! BY HEAVENS, I'D SWAP WITH YOU...!





A MONTH LATER, A LONELY FIGURE WATCHED A CROWDED TROOPSHIP PULL AWAY ...

THERE THEY GO!  
WHEN I WAS A KID  
I USED TO DREAM  
OF GOING INTO BATTLE  
WITH THE RAYNSHIRE'S.  
WHAT ROTTEN TRICKS  
FATE CAN PLAY!



AT THAT MOMENT, JERRY'S NEWS EDITOR WAS FROWNING AT ONE OF HIS STORIES ...

WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO BELLAMY? THIS IS QUITE GOOD BUT IT'S NOWHERE NEAR UP TO HIS STANDARD. BELLAMY CAN WRITE BRILLIANTLY WHEN HE WANTS TO ...

I KNOW, SIR. BUT HIS MIND'S FULL OF THAT CONFOUNDED REGIMENT OF HIS. I LIKE JERRY ... BUT I DO THINK A WORD FROM YOU MIGHT HELP! LIKE YOU SAY, WE LOOK TO HIM FOR SOMETHING BETTER THAN THE USUAL RUN OF STORIES.





THAT AFTERNOON ...



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL MORNING, JERRY? THE BOSS WANTS TO SEE YOU!

BEEN DOWN AT THE DOCKS! AND I WAS GOING IN TO SEE THE BOSS ANYWAY.

THE NEWS EDITOR WAS A GRUFF BUT KINDLY MAN ... AND HE ALSO BADLY WANTED HIS STAR REPORTER TO GET BACK INTO HIS USUAL FORM ...

BEFORE YOU TELL ME WHAT IT IS YOU WANT TO SEE *ME* ABOUT, LET ME HAVE *MY* SAY FIRST! LATELY, YOUR WORK HAS LOST MOST OF ITS USUAL SPARKLE ... AND I'VE BEEN TOLD IT'S BECAUSE YOU HAVE THIS REGIMENT — THE RAYNSHIRE RIFLES — ON YOUR MIND.

I'M SORRY ABOUT MY WORK, SIR ... BUT THAT *IS* THE REASON, RIGHT ENOUGH.

THE NEWS EDITOR LEANED BACK IN HIS CHAIR ...

CARE TO TELL ME *WHY* THIS REGIMENT MEANS SO MUCH TO YOU, BELLAMY. I'D LIKE TO KNOW... AND IT MIGHT DO *YOU* GOOD TO TALK ABOUT IT!

WELL, THAT'S REALLY WHAT I WAS GOING TO SEE YOU ABOUT, SIR. SO HERE GOES ...!





THE EDITOR DID NOT REPLY IMMEDIATELY. HE ROSE TO HIS FEET AND THOUGHTFULLY PACED THE FLOOR. THEN...

I THINK I UNDERSTAND, JERRY! I CAN'T GET YOU INTO THE FORCES IF THE MEDICAL BOARDS WON'T ACCEPT YOU. BUT I CAN GET YOU INTO A UNIFORM... AS A CORRESPONDENT!

A WAR CORRESPONDENT! WHY... THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL! THANK YOU, SIR! THANKS...

BUT THE EDITOR CUT SHORT JERRY'S THANKS...

NOW, GET THIS STRAIGHT, JERRY. I'M NOT GIVING YOU THIS JOB BECAUSE I'M BIG-HEARTED. NO! YOU'RE ONE OF MY BEST WRITERS, AND I JUST WANT TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOU. WE ALREADY HAVE ONE MAN OUT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT WITH YOUR MILITARY UNDERSTANDING, YOU SHOULD TURN IN SOME GOOD STUFF!

I UNDERSTAND, SIR! IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S UP TO ME WHETHER I CAN HOLD ON TO THE JOB. THAT SUITS ME FINE!



TWO DAYS LATER, JERRY WAS READY TO LEAVE ...

GOOD LUCK, JERRY. GIVE MY REGARDS TO BILL PARKER WHEN YOU REPORT TO HIM IN CAIRO. AND DON'T FORGET ... I EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM YOU!

I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, SIR!



AND WITHIN A FEW MINUTES, THE DAKOTA WAS STREAKING DOWN THE RUNWAY ...

SOMEONE SPECIAL YOU'RE SENDING OUT THERE?

HE COULD BE! HE COULD WELL BE ONE OF THE BEST... PROVIDED HE GETS THE BREAKS!



AS THE TRANSPORT ROARED EASTWARDS, JERRY INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO A VETERAN WAR CORRESPONDENT FROM ANOTHER NEWSPAPER ...

SO THIS IS YOUR SECOND TRIP TO THE WESTERN DESERT. I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET THERE!

DON'T GET TOO EAGER, JERRY! WE'RE ONLY FLYING TO CAIRO... AND THAT'S NOT THE DESERT BY A LONG CHALK!



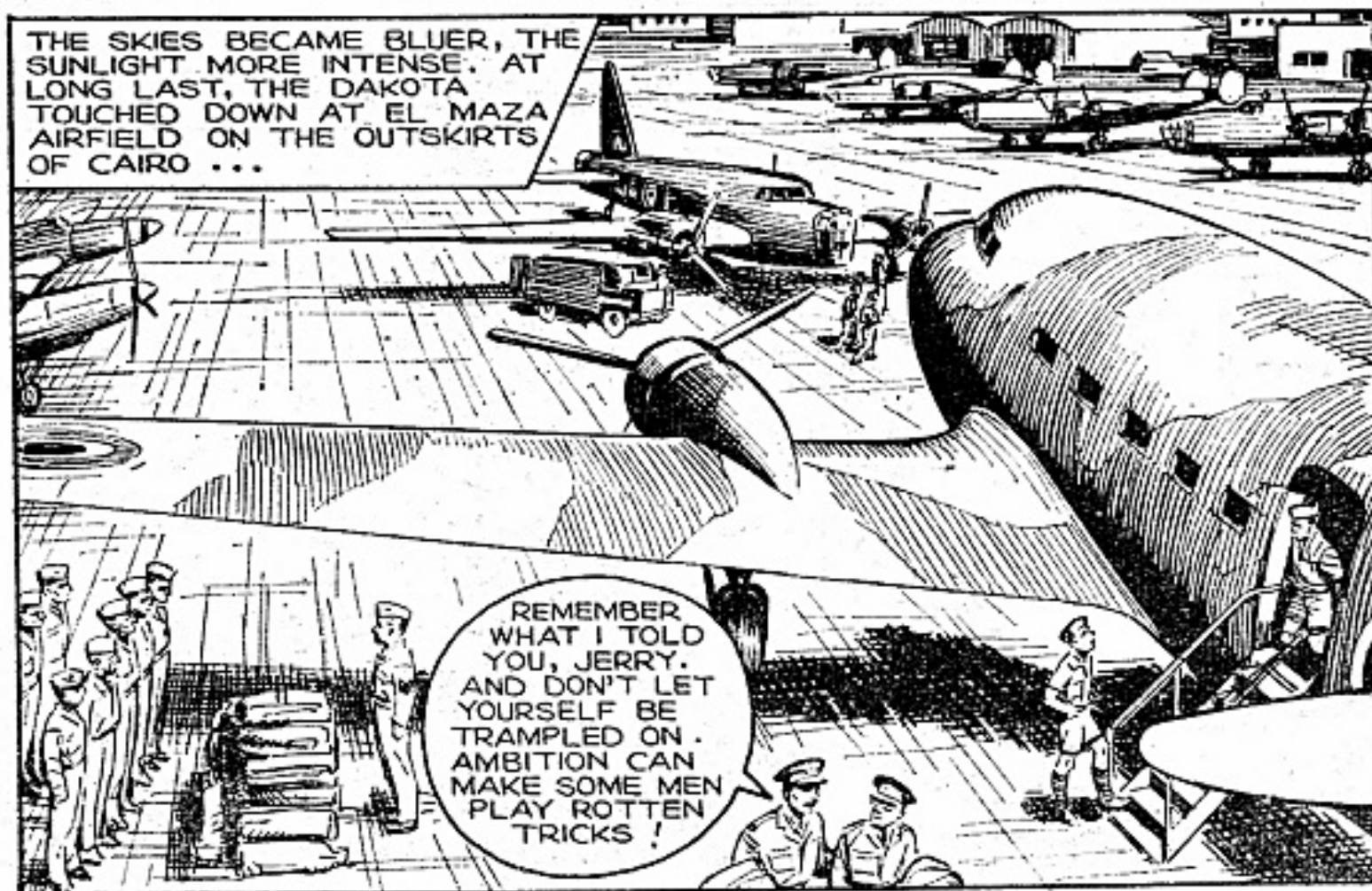


YOU SEE, JERRY, GENERAL H.Q. WILL ONLY ALLOW A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PRESS BLOKES UP AT THE FRONT, AND THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE WHERE YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF A REPUTATION. I ONLY HOPE THIS BLOKE YOU'LL BE WORKING UNDER WON'T TRY TO HOG ALL THE GLAMOUR FOR HIMSELF!

BILL PARKER, YOU MEAN?  
WELL, I'VE NEVER MET HIM... BUT I'M SURE HE'LL PLAY FAIR!



THE SKIES BECAME BLUER, THE SUNLIGHT MORE INTENSE. AT LONG LAST, THE DAKOTA TOUCHED DOWN AT EL MAZA AIRFIELD ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CAIRO ...



REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU, JERRY. AND DON'T LET YOURSELF BE TRAMPLED ON. AMBITION CAN MAKE SOME MEN PLAY ROTTEN TRICKS!

AND THE VETERAN CORRESPONDENT'S ADVICE WAS SOUND. FOR AT THAT VERY MOMENT, BILL PARKER WAS GIVING VENT TO HIS FEELINGS.

WHAT'S GOT INTO MY EDITOR, THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW? WHY IS HE SENDING OUT THIS BELLAMY BLOKE? I TELL YOU, HARRY, I DON'T LIKE IT!

YEAH, YOU GOT TO WATCH THINGS LIKE THAT. THIS NEW CHAP COULD BE EARMARKED FOR YOUR JOB!



WELL, I'M LOOKING AFTER NUMBER ONE! THIS BELLAMY IS SUPPOSED TO ASSIST ME... SO THAT'S WHAT HE **WILL** DO! HE CAN ROT HERE IN CAIRO LOOKING AFTER THE PAPER WORK... WHILE I GO 'UP THE BLUE' AND WRITE MYSELF A REPUTATION!

1	8	18	21	24
2	9	16	23	30
3	10	17	24	31
4	11	18	25	-
5	12	19	26	-
6	13	20	27	-
7	14	21	28	-





## Chapter 2. *The Decoys*

WEEKS PASSED... IN WHICH JERRY BELLAMY KEPT THE CAIRO OFFICE RUNNING SMOOTHLY.



MORE STUFF  
IN FROM BILL  
PARKER!

OKAY...OKAY.  
ADD IT TO THIS  
LOT...!

DAY AFTER DAY THE BORING WORK WENT ON... CHECKING THE FACTS IN PARKER'S STORIES, RETYPING THEM NEATLY FOR RADIOING BACK TO ENGLAND...



MORE STORIES FROM  
MISTER PARKER. WHERE  
SHALL I PUT 'EM?

I DON'T KNOW...  
I DON'T CARE!  
THROW THEM OUT OF THE  
WINDOW! BURN THEM!  
THEY'RE NOTHING BUT  
JUNK, ANYWAY!

...UNTIL AT LAST JERRY EXPLODED!

THE ORDERLY'S MOUTH GAPED. HE NEVER DREAMED THAT MILD, INOFFENSIVE-LOOKING JERRY BELLAMY COULD BE CAPABLE OF SUCH ANGER ...

NOTHING IN THAT TRASH TELLS YOU A THING ABOUT THE SOLDIER AT THE FRONT... WHAT HE'S THINKING, HOW HE FEELS WHEN THE BULLETS AND SHRAPNEL ARE WHIPPING ABOUT HIM! THAT'S WHAT WAR MEANS TO MOST READERS! THEY WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING OF WHAT THEIR SONS, BROTHERS AND HUSBANDS ARE GOING THROUGH! NOT PUT UP WITH DEADLY-DULL ESSAYS ON TACTICS!

THE ORDERLY'S MOUTH GAPED. HE NEVER DREAMED THAT MILD, INOFFENSIVE-LOOKING JERRY BELLAMY COULD BE CAPABLE OF SUCH ANGER ...

I'M GOING OUT... AND TO HANG WITH THE DESPATCHES! IF I HAVE TO STAY IN THAT OFFICE ANOTHER MINUTE I... I'LL GO *NUTS*!

BUT... BUT, MISTER BELLAMY! WHAT SHALL I DO WITH...?



MOOCHING DISCONSOLATELY ALONG THE TEEMING CAIRO STREETS, JERRY WAS HAILED BY A FAMILIAR VOICE ...

HEY, JERRY! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU. CALLED AT YOUR OFFICE ... BUT THE ORDERLY THERE SAID YOU'D GONE OFF YOUR *ROCKER*!

OH ... HELLO THERE!







SUDDENLY JERRY'S LEAN FACE TOOK ON A LOOK OF EAGERNESS.

HOW ABOUT SMUGGLING ME UP THERE WITH YOU, JOE? JUST FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS... THEN I'LL HITCH MY WAY BACK!

DON'T BE CRAZY... WAIT! YOU'VE BEEN GETTING THE TREATMENT THAT I WARNED YOU ABOUT! IS THAT IT? **OKAY** THEN, JERRY, I'LL PICK YOU UP TOMORROW MORNING... EARLY!



SO NEXT MORNING, THE TWO JOURNALISTS, VETERAN AND NEWCOMER, DROVE TO THE FRONT... PASSED THE LINES OF THE TRANSPORTS WHICH WERE MAKING READY FOR THE ENSUING BATTLE.



I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE SO KEEN TO GET INTO A BATTLE. CRAZY LITTLE GUY... BUT IF HE DOESN'T GET HIMSELF KILLED I'VE A HUNCH HE'S GOING TO MAKE US CORRESPONDENTS SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE. THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ABOUT HIM ...



AS JERRY APPROACHED THE RAYNSHIRE POSITIONS HE SAW A WHITE-FACED YOUNGSTER SITTING IN A SLIT TRENCH, WRITING A LETTER. JERRY'S EYES NOTICED THAT THE SOLDIER'S HANDS WERE TREMBLING AS HE WROTE ...

IT'S SOLDIERS LIKE HIM I'D LIKE TO WRITE ABOUT. THE LITTLE MEN WHO ARE SCARED SILLY BUT STILL KEEP ON GOING. THE ORDINARY SOLDIER... THE CIVILIAN WHO SUDDENLY FINDS HE HAS TO KILL OR BE KILLED!





THEN JERRY WALKED ON... AND THE NEXT PERSON HE MET WAS HIS FRIEND, CAPTAIN MIKE RICHARDS...

JERRY! I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! SO YOU DID MANAGE TO GET INTO THE WAR...

I HAVEN'T MANAGED IT YET, MIKE... BUT I'M ON MY WAY! AND DON'T THINK IT'S BEEN EASY, EITHER!




COLONEL ROWLAND, THE RAYNSHIRE'S COMMANDING OFFICER, GREETED JERRY WITH EQUAL WARMTH. THEN HIS FACE SOBERED AS HE STUDIED THE LITTLE NEWSPAPERMAN'S SHOULDER FLASHES...


I SEE YOU'RE A WAR CORRESPONDENT, JERRY. WELL, YOU OBVIOUSLY KNOW THAT WE'RE ABOUT TO MAKE OUR BATTLE DEBUT. THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN SENT HERE, ISN'T IT?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT, SIR. BUT I DON'T KNOW ANY DETAILS!





WELL, I'LL PUT YOU IN THE PICTURE. THE REGIMENT IS TO ADVANCE FROM HERE AT DAWN TOMORROW. WE'RE TO TAKE AND HOLD A RIDGE OF HILLS ABOUT FIVE MILES AWAY!



I SEE, SIR! HAVE YOU ANY IDEA AS TO WHAT OPPOSITION YOU'LL BE UP AGAINST?

AT HIS QUESTION, JERRY SAW AN EXPRESSIONLESS MASK SLIDE OVER THE FACES OF COLONEL ROWLAND AND MIKE RICHARDS... THE MASK BEHIND WHICH THE FIGHTING MAN HID HIS TAUTENED NERVES AND FEAR OF DEATH. BUT THE C.O.'S VOICE WAS CALM AND CAREFULLY CONTROLLED...

YES, JERRY, WE **DO** KNOW WHAT WE'LL BE UP AGAINST... A CRACK GERMAN REGIMENT, THE S.S. GRENADIERS! OUR JOB IS TO KEEP THAT REGIMENT BUSY... WHILE THE MAIN ATTACK STARTS FARTHER ALONG THE SECTOR. YOU SEE, IT DOESN'T EVEN MATTER IF WE **DON'T** TAKE OUR OBJECTIVE. WE'RE JUST... DECOYS, JERRY!





COLONEL ROWLAND'S WORDS DIED AWAY INTO A HEAVY, MEANINGFUL SILENCE. THEN CAPTAIN MIKE RICHARDS BROKE THE TENSION ...

IT WON'T EXACTLY BE A SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC, JERRY... AND THERE'S NO REASON AT ALL WHY YOU SHOULD RISK GETTING YOUR BLOCK SHOT OFF BY COMING WITH US! YOU CAN STAY WITH THE SIGNALS SQUAD... AND YOU'LL GET ALL THE INFORMATION YOU WANT OVER THE AIR!

THAT'S JUST **REPORTING** BATTLE, MIKE... NOT SEEING IT. I DON'T WANT TO COVER THE WAR THAT WAY...



BEHIND HIS SPECTACLES, JERRY'S BLUE EYES WERE VERY SERIOUS. **HE WAS MAKING THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF HIS LIFE...**



I WANT TO MOVE UP WITH YOU ALL. I WANT TO BE SCARED OF THE SAME THINGS YOUR MEN ARE GOING TO BE SCARED OF! I'VE GOT TO KNOW HOW THEY **FEEL** AS THEY FIGHT FOR THAT RIDGE. THE WAY I WANT TO WRITE... **I'VE GOT TO BE ONE OF THEM!**

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, FROM JUST BEHIND THE WAITING RAYNSHIREs, FIELD GUNS TURNED THE DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN INTO A THUNDERING, FLAME-LASHED INFERNO...



FOR TEN MINUTES THE BARRAGE RAGED ... THEN, AS THE LAST SHELL SCREAMED ON ITS WAY TOWARDS THE SMOKE-COVERED HILL, **THE RAYNSHIRE'S MOVED OUT...**



AN HOUR PASSED ... AN HOUR OF TRIPPING AND STUMBLING IN THE DARKNESS. THEN THE GERMANS HIT BACK ...





NOW THE DEEP, COUGHING ROAR OF MORTAR SHELLS MERGED WITH THE EAR-SPLITTING CRASH OF 88 mm. EXPLOSIONS. BUT STILL THE RAYNSHIRE'S ADVANCE CONTINUED WITHOUT FALTERING...



BUT FAR WORSE WAS TO COME. DAYLIGHT BROUGHT THE FLAT ECHOING CHATTER OF SPANDAUS... AND THE BULLETS CUT THROUGH THE BRITISH RANKS LIKE SCYTHES IN A CORNFIELD.



BUT STILL THE RAYNSHIRE'S WENT ON.  
BUT NOW THEY WERE RUNNING, YELLING  
HOARSELY AS THEY SMASHED INTO THE  
ENEMY'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE ...

INTO THEM!



THEN UP THE SLOPE OF THE FIRST  
HILL, FIGHTING ALL THE WAY. AND  
AS JERRY BELLAMY WATCHED, MEN  
LIKE SERGEANT HAMMER -- THE  
IRON-DISCIPLINED TERROR OF THE  
DRILL SQUARE -- REVEALED FOR  
THE FIRST TIME THEIR TRUE  
COLOURS ...

HANG ON, SON.  
I'LL GET YOU BACK  
TO SHELTER...





HE SAW PRIVATE SPARKS CHANGE WITHIN MINUTES FROM A TREMBLING, TERRIFIED BOY ... INTO A DEADLY-COOL FIGHTING MAN ...



AND WHEN THE BLOOD-CHILLING BULK OF A GERMAN ARMoured CAR LOOMED SUDDENLY BEFORE THEM ... JERRY WATCHED CAPTAIN MIKE RICHARDS WIN HIS D.S.O. ...



FOR WHAT SEEMED AN ETERNITY THE BATTLE RAGED. THEN CAME A STRANGE LULL ... AND ...

THEY'RE PULLING OUT! I CAN SEE THEM ...!



FROM THE TOP OF THE FINAL HILL, THE RAYNSHIRE'S LOOKED DOWN AT THE GERMAN LORRIES STREAMING AWAY TOWARDS THE SOUTH ...

WE CAN'T TAKE ALL THE CREDIT FOR THAT, MIKE. I THINK THE JERRIES TUMBLED TO THIS BEING A DECOY ATTACK. THEY'VE PULLED OUT TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST OUR MAIN ASSAULT!

WELL, SIR, WE DID WHAT WE WERE ASKED. WE KEPT THEM OCCUPIED!

'THE RAYNSHIRE'S KEPT THE ENEMY OCCUPIED'. IT DOESN'T SOUND MUCH... BUT PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HEAR WHAT THOSE WORDS **REALLY** MEAN. I'M GOING TO GIVE THEM THE FULL STORY... **THE TRUE STORY!**





THE RAYNSHIRE'S HAD TAKEN THEIR FIRST OBJECTIVE...AND AS THE BATTLE-EXHAUSTED SOLDIERS THREW THEMSELVES WEARILY TO THE GROUND, JERRY BELLAMY BEGAN *HIS* WORK...

...BUT IF THESE TIRED SOLDIERS WITH THE GRIME OF COMBAT ON THEIR FACES KNEW I WAS CALLING THEM HEROES THEY'D BE EMBARRASSED. TAKE CORPORAL BRIAN JONES, WHO WIPED OUT A GERMAN MACHINE-GUN SINGLEHANDED. HE DOESN'T THINK HE'S A HERO. NOR DOES PRIVATE BOBBY STRANG FROM BLACKPOOL. HE'LL TELL YOU HE WAS JUST DOING HIS DUTY WHEN HE TOOK ON AN EIGHTY-EIGHT MILLIMETRE WITH JUST A COUPLE OF GRENADES...



... BECAUSE I WENT INTO THE FIGHT WITH THEM I CAN TELL YOU HOW THEIR BLOOD FROZE WHEN THE BULLETS CRACKED PAST THEIR HEADS. HOW THEY HAD TO **FORCE** THEMSELVES TO KEEP MOVING WHEN THE SHRAPNEL CUT DOWN FRIENDS NEXT TO THEM. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THESE THINGS BECAUSE YOU'VE AS MUCH RIGHT TO BE PROUD OF THESE MEN AS I HAVE. THAT'S WHY I AM WRITING THIS STORY.



# Chapter 3. One of the Boys

AND SO JERRY BELLAMY WROTE HIS FIRST BATTLE STORY...AND WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, HE WENT TO SEE HIS FRIEND, CAPTAIN MIKE RICHARDS...

CAN YOU HELP ME GET THIS STORY BACK TO CAIRO, MIKE?

I GUESS SO, JERRY. WE'RE SENDING AN AMMUNITION LORRY BACK TO FIELD H.Q., AND THE DRIVER CAN TAKE IT WITH HIM. IT'S STRANGE YOU WAR CORRESPONDENTS AREN'T BETTER ORGANISED FOR GETTING YOUR STUFF BACK FROM THE FRONT.



WELL... NORMALLY... WE DO, MIKE! BUT... BUT I MAY AS WELL TELL YOU, I WASN'T *SENT* OUT HERE. I CAME UNDER MY OWN STEAM... I JUST COULDN'T ROT AWAY IN CAIRO...

THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU, JERRY. YOU HAD TO BE WHERE THE FIGHTING WAS...





MIKE, YOU REALISE THAT AS I'M HERE **UNOFFICIALLY**, YOU STAND THE CHANCE OF LANDING YOURSELF IN TROUBLE BY NOT SENDING ME BACK?

I'LL RISK THAT FOR YOU, JERRY. BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO STAY WITH US, YOU'LL HAVE TO ROUGH IT -- JUST LIKE THE REST OF US. WE CAN'T EVEN SPARE YOU A JEEP ...



JERRY SHOOK HIS HEAD, HIS EYES GLEAMING WITH DELIGHT ...

AS I TOLD YOU, MIKE, I DON'T **WANT** ANY SPECIAL PRIVILEGES. I KNOW THAT SOONER OR LATER I'LL BE YANKED BACK TO CAIRO ... BUT I JUST WANT THE CHANCE TO WRITE A FEW STORIES FIRST. TO REPORT THE WAR AS I THINK IT **SHOULD** BE REPORTED!



THE RAYNSHIRE'S WERE ALLOWED LITTLE REST AFTER THEIR ASSAULT ON THE RIDGE. AS SOON AS REPLACEMENT TROOPS ARRIVED TO BRING THE UNIT UP TO FIGHTING STRENGTH ONCE MORE, THEY MOVED OUT IN PURSUIT OF THE SLOWLY RETREATING ENEMY ...



THEY TRIPPED AND STUMBLED OVER THE ROCK-STREWN SAND...THICK DUST STUNG THEIR EYES AND PARCHED THEIR THROATS... AND THE STIFLING HEAT MOUNTED IN FIERCE INTENSITY AS THE MOLTEN SUN SWUNG OVER THEIR HEADS. BUT STILL THEY MARCHED...

HOW MUCH FARTHER WE GOT TO GO? THIS RIFLE FEELS LIKE IT WEIGHS A TON. I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS...

I KNOW IT'S ROUGH, JIM. BUT WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE GIVING UP... TAKE A LOOK BEHIND YOU...



BEHIND THE COLUMN, STAGGERING BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF NECESSARY EQUIPMENT BUT REFUSING ALL OFFERS OF AID, CAME JERRY BELLAMY...

... AT THAT LITTLE BLOKE BELLAMY! WHAT WITH HIS TYPEWRITER AND OTHER THINGS, HE'S JUST ABOUT GOT AS MUCH TO CARRY AS WE HAVE. **BUT HE KEEPS GOING... AND IF HE CAN DO IT, THEN WE CAN!**



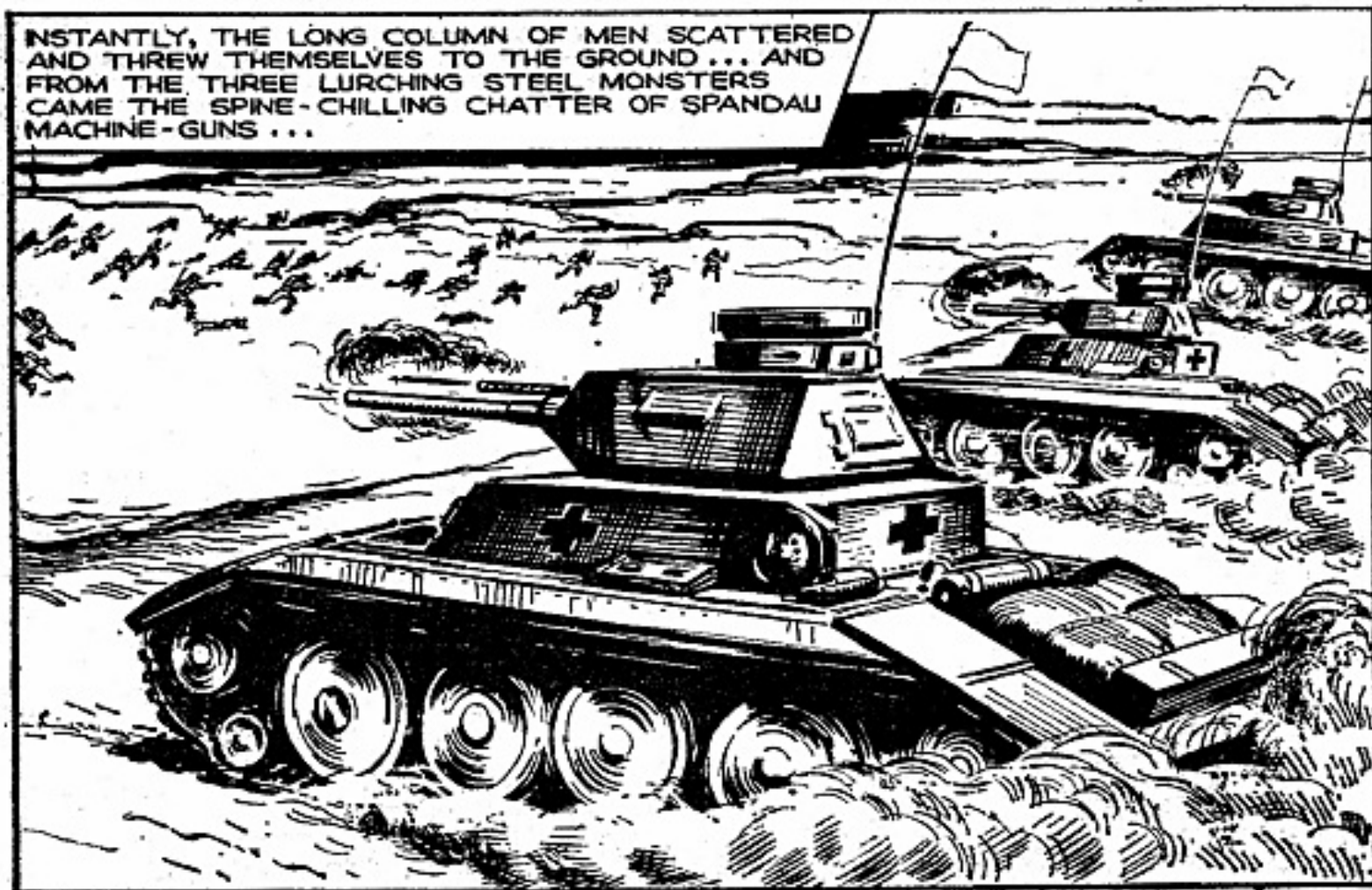


SUDDENLY... FROM THE SCOUTS  
AHEAD OF THE COLUMN CAME A CRY  
THAT MADE EVERY MAN FORGET  
HIS WEARINESS.


TANKS! ENEMY  
TANKS... COMING  
STRAIGHT FOR US!



INSTANTLY, THE LONG COLUMN OF MEN SCATTERED  
AND THREW THEMSELVES TO THE GROUND... AND  
FROM THE THREE LURCHING STEEL MONSTERS  
CAME THE SPINE-CHILLING CHATTER OF SPANDAU  
MACHINE-GUNS...



WITH STEEL-JACKETED BULLETS CRACKING THROUGH THE AIR ABOUT HIM, JERRY SCRAMBLED DESPERATELY FOR A SHALLOW HOLLOW...



TAKE IT EASY, JERRY.  
BREAKING YOUR NECK  
WILL KILL YOU JUST AS  
EASY AS A JERRY  
BULLET!

JERRY SAW THAT HIS COMPANIONS IN THE HOLLOW WERE CORPORAL JACKSON AND ONE OF THE REPLACEMENT TROOPS THAT HAD JOINED THE UNIT THAT MORNING...



O'BRIAN,  
CLARKSON!  
START USING  
THOSE BOYES  
RIFLES!  
QUICKLY!

KEEP YOUR HEAD  
DOWN, SON. THERE'S  
NOTHING *WE* CAN DO  
WITH JUST RIFLES!



AN INSTANT LATER, A BRITISH ANTI-TANK RIFLE BLASTED, AND ONE OF THE ENEMY TANKS SHUDDERED TO A STOP... BUT NOW THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE USING H.E. SHELLS!



A SHELL BURST LIKE A THUNDERCLAP ONLY A FEW FEET AWAY FROM JERRY'S HOLLOW... AND THE WAR CORRESPONDENT SAW THE YOUNG SOLDIER'S FACE CREASE INTO A MASK OF SHEER HORROR...

MISSED THE BLIGHTER! THEY'RE TOO FAR AWAY... AND IN ANY CASE IT'S NO USE JUST CHUCKING GRENADES AT RANDOM!

WE...WE'LL BE KILLED! WE CAN'T FIGHT TANKS!



CORPORAL JACKSON HAD NOT HEARD THE YOUNG SOLDIER'S CRY OF TERROR...

NOW THAT OUR ANTI-TANK RIFLES HAVE BEEN KNOCKED OUT, THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THOSE PANZERS IS TO GET 'EM **AT CLOSE RANGE!** COMING WITH ME, SON?

NO... NO...!



AS THE YOUNGSTER COWERED BACK IN FEAR, JACKSON GLANCED UNDERSTANDINGLY ACROSS AT JERRY...

I---I'M NOT  
GOING OUT  
THERE...!

I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED THE POOR KID,  
JERRY. THIS IS HIS FIRST ACTION! NO, I'VE  
GOT TO DO THIS ALONE! I KNOW YOU'D  
COME WITH ME, JERRY, BUT YOU  
CORRESPONDENTS AREN'T SUPPOSED  
TO DO ANY FIGHTING...



...SO HERE  
GOES!

GUNNER!  
TRAVERSE LEFT...  
LEFT!





SPANDAUS CLAMMERED AGAIN AS THE GERMAN TANK GUNNERS HOSED BULLETS TOWARDS THE RUNNING TOMMY. BUT ON THAT RIDGE, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AGO, CORPORAL JACKSON HAD LEARNED HOW TO WEAVE AND DUCK...

YOU AIN'T STOPPING ME NOW, JERRY...



THE CORPORAL'S LUCK LASTED... BUT ONLY UNTIL HIS GRENADE BURST SHATTERINGLY AGAINST A TANK TRACK...

AAAAGH!



FRANTICALLY, ALMOST FAINTING WITH THE PAIN FROM HIS SHATTERED LEG, JACKSON ROLLED OVER AND OVER ON THE GROUND...TRYING TO AVOID THE STREAMS OF LEAD THAT SOUGHT TO FINISH HIM OFF...

COME ON...  
DON'T LEAVE  
IT TO ONE  
MAN!



... BUT THE CORPORAL'S  
GALLANTRY HAD CRIPPLED  
ANOTHER PANZER...AND INSPIRED  
HIS COMRADES TO ATTACK!

... AND WITH THEM, RUNNING THROUGH THE SNAPPING  
CURTAIN OF SPANDAU LEAD, CAME JERRY BELLAMY...

I'M NOT ALLOWED  
TO DO THE FIGHTING...  
BUT I CAN HELP  
THOSE WHO DO!





JERRY GRABBED THE UNCONSCIOUS CORPORAL JACKSON BY THE SHOULDERS AND TRIED TO DRAG HIM AWAY FROM THE ENEMY GUNS ...

I...I CAN'T...  
MOVE HIM!



THEN HELPING HANDS TOOK HOLD OF THE WOUNDED N.C.O. IT WAS THE YOUNG SOLDIER WHO HAD SHARED THE HOLLOW WITH JERRY AND CORPORAL JACKSON ... BUT THERE WAS NO FEAR ON HIS FACE NOW ...

GOOD LAD!

I...I COULDN'T  
JUST STAY BACK.  
NOT AFTER SEEING  
WHAT HE DID...!



CORPORAL JACKSON CAME TO AS JERRY AND THE YOUNG SOLDIER CARRIED HIM TO SAFETY. THEY HAD TO WEAVE THROUGH A STREAM OF BULLETS FROM THE LAST SURVIVING TANK ...

ONLY ONE LEFT, BLOKES... CLOBBER IT!

YOU'RE OKAY NOW, CORP. THANKS TO THE KID HERE ...

AND TO YOU, JERRY.



TWO HUNDRED YARDS BACK, THEY MET THE STRETCHER BEARERS. THE YOUNGSTER SHOULDERED HIS RIFLE, AND GRINNED DOGGEDLY AT JERRY...

THANKS, MATE ... WE'LL GET HIM TO THE DRESSING STATION.

I'LL COME WITH YOU, CORP. WHAT ABOUT YOU, KID?



I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO BACK THERE, MISTER BELLAMY. AND I'M READY TO DO IT NOW, LIKE THE REST OF THE BLOKES...



NEWS THAT THE LAST ENEMY TANK HAD BEEN DESTROYED REACHED THE ADVANCED DRESSING STATION TEN MINUTES LATER...

THE COLONEL'S ORDERED A THREE-HOUR HALT WHILE WE REGROUP AND DEAL WITH OUR WOUNDED, DOC.

RIGHT, CAPTAIN.

GOOD. JUST TIME FOR WHAT I HAVE TO DO...



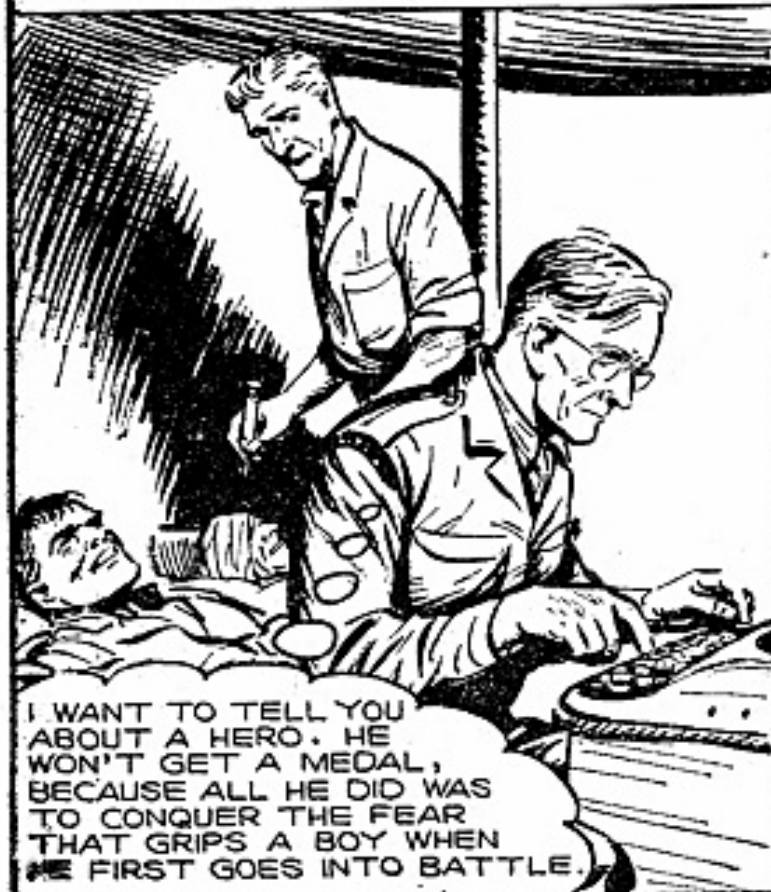
THERE, IN THE SMELL OF ETHER AND ANTISEPTICS, JERRY BELLAMY WROTE THE STORY OF A YOUNG SOLDIER...

THE DOCTOR LEANED OVER CORPORAL JACKSON'S STRETCHER. HE GLANCED CURIOUSLY AT THE LITTLE MAN WITH THE SPECTACLES AND THE TYPEWRITER...

WHO'S THE CHAP WITH THE TYPEWRITER, CORPORAL... A WAR CORRESPONDENT?

I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A HERO. HE WON'T GET A MEDAL, BECAUSE ALL HE DID WAS TO CONQUER THE FEAR THAT GRIPS A BOY WHEN HE FIRST GOES INTO BATTLE.

YEAH, I SUPPOSE HE IS, DOC. WE DON'T THINK OF HIM LIKE THAT, THOUGH. HE'S UP FRONT ALL THE TIME, SLOGGING IT OUT WITH US...



WHEN THE CAPTAIN CAME INTO THE TENT, JERRY SNAPPED HIS TYPEWRITER SHUT AND GOT UP HURRIEDLY...

THE COMPANIES ARE MOVING FORWARD, DOC...

GOT TO GET GOING AGAIN. GOOD LUCK, CORP. I'LL TELL YOUR SECTION YOU'LL BE OKAY...

SEE WHAT I MEAN, DOC? HE'S JUST ONE OF US...

FOR THE NEXT BLISTERING TWO MONTHS OF DESERT WARFARE, JERRY BELLAMY WAS JUST ONE OF THE RAYNSHIRE. HE WAS THERE WHEN THE FORWARD COMPANIES WERE DIVE-BOMBED BY STUKAS, SOUTH OF TOBRUK...

'THE MEN LIE IN THE SHALLOW PITS THEY'VE DUG, WHILE THE BOMBS FALL AND THE EARTH HEAVES. FOR SOME OF THEM, THOSE SHALLOW PITS WILL BECOME GRAVES...



JERRY BELLAMY WAS THERE WHEN THE RAYNSHIRE'S WERE TRAPPED IN THE GAZALA SALIENT BY THE GERMAN HOWITZERS. HIS TYPEWRITER WAS SMASHED, SO HE WROTE ON A SIGNAL PAD...



WHEN THE RAYNSHIRE'S STUMBLED INTO THE MINEFIELD EAST OF BENGHAZI, JERRY BELLAMY WAS THERE. THAT TIME HE USED THE BACK OF AN ENVELOPE TO WRITE HIS STORY ON...



IN THE GREAT ASSAULT ON THE GERMAN MARETH LINE, THE RAYNSHIRE'S WERE USED AS SHOCK TROOPS. BEFORE THE ATTACK, A STAFF BRIGADIER DROVE UP TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS ...

THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE ZERO HOUR, COLONEL ...

RIGHT. GET THE FORWARD COMPANIES UP TO THE START LINE ...

I'M FROM CAIRO, CAPTAIN. I'M LOOKING FOR A CHAP NAMED BELLAMY WHO'S ATTACHED HIMSELF TO YOUR UNIT ...

IT WAS CAPTAIN MIKE RICHARDS WHO TOOK CHARGE OF THE BRIGADIER. HE REMEMBERED JERRY'S WORDS -- "SOONER OR LATER I'LL BE YANKED BACK TO CAIRO ..."

I'M GOING UP TO THE FIRING LINE NOW, SIR. IF YOU WANT JERRY BELLAMY, YOU'D BETTER COME WITH ME ...

THE MAN I WANT WILL BE AROUND HEADQUARTERS SOMEWHERE, NOT IN THE FIRING LINE, CAPTAIN. HE'S A WAR CORRESPONDENT ...

GRIMLY AMUSED BY THE STAFF OFFICER'S BEWILDERMENT, CAPTAIN RICHARDS TOOK HIM UP TO THE FORWARD AREA. THE GERMAN COUNTER-SHELLING HAD ALREADY STARTED ...

ON TO THE START LINE, MEN. KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN.

STRETCHER BEARERS!

COME ON, SIR. THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND JERRY BELLAMY!





GINGERLY, THE BRIGADIER FOLLOWED MIKE RICHARDS TOWARDS THE MEN CROUCHING AT THE START LINE...

BUT THOSE FELLOWS UP THERE ARE ALL LINE SOLDIERS... RANK AND FILE... ORDINARY CHAPS.

YES... AND JERRY BELLAMY'S ONE OF THEM, BRIGADIER.

WHEN CAPTAIN RICHARDS CALLED HIM, JERRY BELLAMY WAS CROUCHING UNDER THE SHELLFIRE AT THE START TAPE...

DASHED IF I CAN SPOT HIM AMONG THE OTHERS... EXTRAORDINARY BEHAVIOUR FOR A WAR CORRESPONDENT...

HEY, JERRY BELLAMY! YOU'RE WANTED!

CAPTAIN'S CALLING YOU, JERRY...

JERRY TURNED AND SAW THE STAFF OFFICER. HIS HEART SANK. HE KNEW WHAT WAS COMING...

AH, BELLAMY, SO I'VE FOUND YOU AT LAST. YOU'VE NO BUSINESS TO BE HERE, YOU KNOW...

NO, BRIGADIER? I THOUGHT A WAR CORRESPONDENT'S BUSINESS WAS WAR... AND THE WAR'S HERE, YOU KNOW, NOT IN CAIRO...

YOU'RE TO COME BACK TO CAIRO, BELLAMY, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT. MY ORDERS ARE TO SEE YOU RETURN THERE WITHOUT DELAY...

OH HECK...  
SO THEY'VE  
CAUGHT UP  
WITH ME AT  
LAST...



SO JERRY BELLAMY LEFT THE MEN HE RESPECTED, AND THE MEN WHO, IN TWO SEARING MONTHS OF WAR, HAD GROWN TO RESPECT HIM...

WISH US  
LUCK, JERRY...

SO LONG, JERRY...  
WE WON'T FORGET  
YOU!

ALL RIGHT,  
BRIGADIER...  
I'M READY TO  
FACE THE  
MUSIC...





# Chapter 4. At the Top

A FAST JEEP WHISKED JERRY BELLAMY IN FOUR HOURS FROM THE GRIME OF THE FRONT-LINE TO THE COMFORT OF CAIRO. BUT THE RECEPTION HE FACED WAS QUITE UNEXPECTED ...



JERRY BELLAMY BLINKED AT THE ROOMFUL OF BRASSHATS AND TOP-LINE WAR CORRESPONDENTS ...

BUT I THOUGHT YOU'D YANKED ME BACK TO GIVE ME A ROCKET!

FAR FROM IT, OLD CHAP. MAYBE YOU'D DID GO TO THE FRONT WITHOUT PERMISSION... BUT YOUR DISPATCHES HAVE PUT THE EIGHTH ARMY ON THE MAP!

YOU HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO SEE YOUR STORIES IN PRINT, JERRY... HERE ...

JERRY TOOK THE NEWSPAPER IN A DAZE. HIS MINEFIELD STORY WAS SPLASHED OVER THE FRONT-PAGE UNDER BANNER HEADLINES ...

TOP WAR CORRESPONDENT... ME!



IT WAS BILL PARKER WHO HAD GIVEN JERRY THE NEWSPAPER. JERRY FELT AWKWARD...



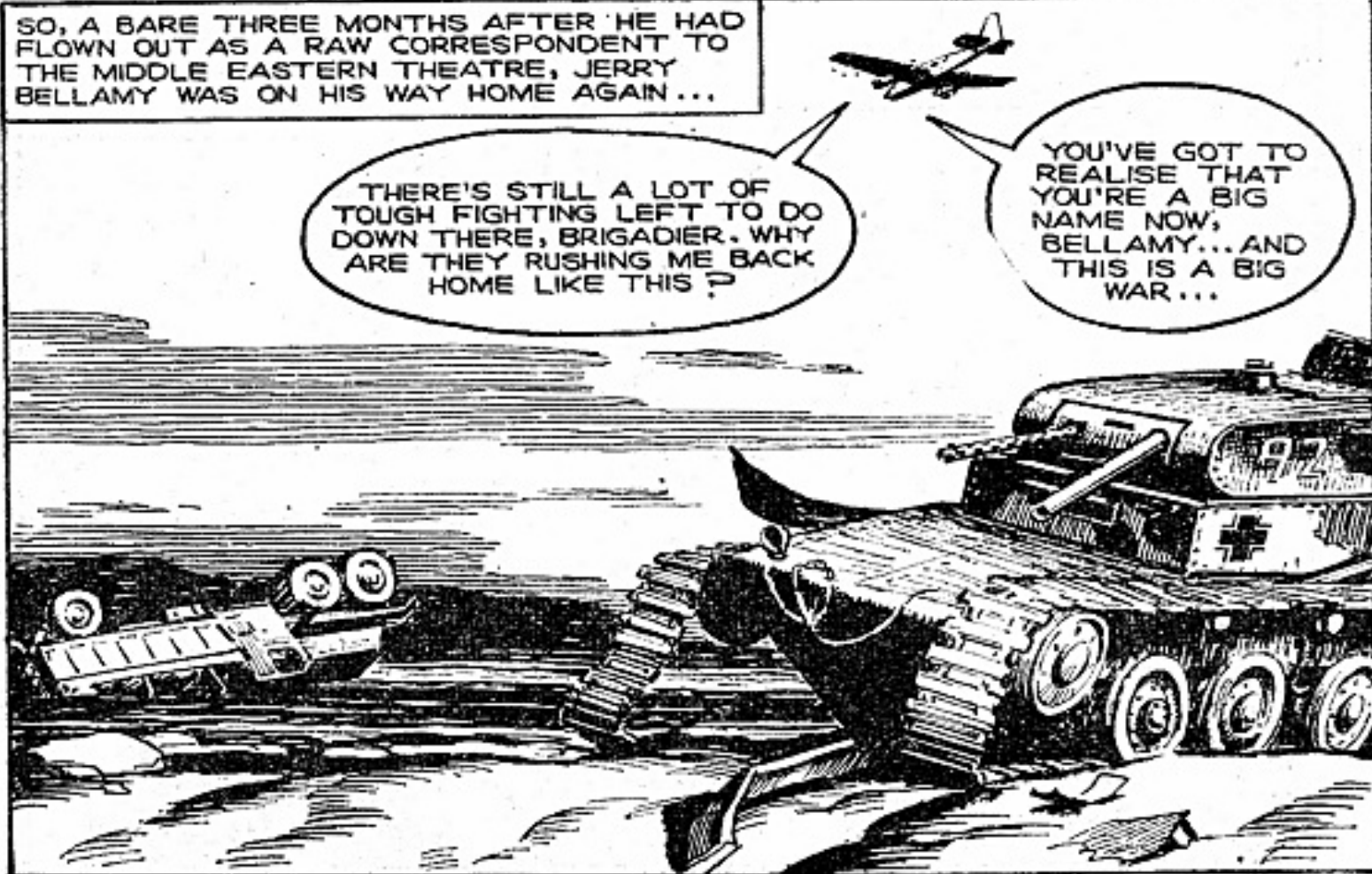
THERE WAS AN INGRATIATING SMILE ON THE OFFICIAL WAR CORRESPONDENT'S PLUMP FACE. IT ANGERED JERRY...



SO, A BARE THREE MONTHS AFTER HE HAD FLOWN OUT AS A RAW CORRESPONDENT TO THE MIDDLE EASTERN THEATRE, JERRY BELLAMY WAS ON HIS WAY HOME AGAIN...

THERE'S STILL A LOT OF TOUGH FIGHTING LEFT TO DO DOWN THERE, BRIGADIER. WHY ARE THEY RUSHING ME BACK HOME LIKE THIS?

YOU'VE GOT TO REALISE THAT YOU'RE A BIG NAME NOW, BELLAMY... AND THIS IS A BIG WAR...





IT TOOK JERRY BELLAMY A LONG TIME TO REALISE JUST HOW BIG A NAME HE HAD MADE FOR HIMSELF. IN THE FLEET STREET OFFICE OF HIS NEWSPAPER NEXT DAY, THEY TRIED TO CONVINCE HIM...

HECK, I JUST WROTE  
WHAT I SAW ...  
WHAT I FELT...

I KNEW YOU HAD THE MAKINGS  
OF A NEWSPERMAN, JERRY,  
BUT YOU'VE SURPRISED EVEN ME.  
YOU'VE GOT FIVE MILLION  
READERS HANGING ON EVERY  
WORD YOU WRITE...



AND IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED,  
THE WAR OFFICE SHOWED THAT THEY  
APPRECIATED JERRY BELLAMY'S  
IMPORTANCE...

WE WILL HAVE TO PULL  
BACK OUR FORWARD  
TROOPS, REGROUP AND  
CONSERVE OUR STRENGTH.



IT'LL MEAN A  
TWO-MONTH PAUSE  
IN OUR OFFENSIVE.  
THE PUBLIC'S GOING  
TO GET IMPATIENT...  
BUT I'M SURE  
BELLAMY CAN PUT  
OUR REASONS  
ACROSS TO  
THEM...

I'LL DO MY  
BEST, SIR...

DURING THOSE MONTHS, JERRY SAT IN  
ON MANY TOP-SECRET OPERATIONAL  
CONFERENCES. ONE OF THEM DEALT  
WITH THE EIGHTH ARMY'S INVASION  
OF ITALY...

'X' GROUP LANDS AT  
O-FOUR-HUNDRED HOURS  
ON THE TARENTIN  
PENINSULAR. AT THE SAME  
TIME, AIRBORNE TROOPS  
DROP WEST OF THE  
BEACH-HEAD...



YOU WON'T BE  
ABLE TO REPORT  
ANY OF THIS YET,  
BELLAMY, BUT WE  
WANTED TO KEEP  
YOU IN THE  
PICTURE...

THE MONTHS WORE ON. THE EIGHTH ARMY, AFTER ITS VICTORY IN THE DESERT, SLOGGED NORTHWARDS THROUGH ITALY. IN LONDON, JERRY BELLAMY WAS BECOMING UNEASY...

I KNOW THIS HIGH-LEVEL STUFF IS IMPORTANT, COLONEL, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME I'M GETTING OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE ACTUAL WAR...

YOU'RE AN IMPORTANT CHAP, NOW, BELLAMY. WE CAN'T WASTE YOUR TALENTS ON SOME REMOTE CORNER OF THE WORLD - BATTLE. BUT I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO...

A FEW WEEKS LATER, ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR JERRY BELLAMY TO MAKE A FLYING VISIT TO INDIA...

THE FOURTEENTH ARMY IS BEGINNING TO PUSH THE JAPS BACK FROM THE INDIA-BURMA FRONTIER, BELLAMY. IT'S A BATTLEFRONT WHICH HASN'T HIT THE HEADLINES. THE MEN CALL THEMSELVES THE FORGOTTEN ARMY...

MAYBE I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, BRIGADIER...



JERRY WAS FLOWN TO GROUP HEADQUARTERS ON THE IMPHAL FRONT IN NORTHERN INDIA. BUT HE WAS STILL A HUNDRED MILES FROM THE ACTUAL FIGHTING...

HOW CAN I WRITE ABOUT THE JUNGLE WAR IF YOU WON'T LET ME GET NEARER TO IT THAN THIS?

IF YOU INSIST, I'LL TRY TO PERSUADE THE GENERAL, MISTER BELLAMY...



TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, A STAFF TRANSPORT PLANE CIRCLED LAZILY ABOVE THE JUNGLE. INSIDE, JERRY BELLAMY HAD A TYPEWRITER ON HIS KNEES AND A FROWN ON HIS FACE...

COLD DRINK, SIR? YOU MUST BE FEELING HOT...



NOT AS HOT AS THOSE CHAPS ARE DOWN THERE, STEWARD... AND THEY HAVEN'T GOT ANY COLD DRINKS... HOW CAN I WRITE A FRONT-LINE STORY IN CONDITIONS LIKE THIS?

JERRY KNOCKED OUT THAT STORY ON THE JUNGLE ARMY. IT REACHED HIS NEWS EDITOR'S DESK A DAY LATER...

IT HASN'T GOT JERRY'S USUAL TOUCH... IT'S LIFELESS... NO FEELING...

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, SIR. I'M AFRAID BELLAMY'S NOT BEEN LIVING UP TO HIS REPUTATION IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS...

WHEN JERRY BELLAMY RETURNED TO LONDON A WEEK LATER, THE NEWS EDITOR HAD A WORD WITH HIM...

HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYING THIS, JERRY...

IT'S THE TRUTH, CHIEF. BUT HOW CAN I PUT FEELING INTO A STORY WHEN I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING MYSELF? I'VE GOT TO BE DOWN THERE SWEATING IT OUT WITH THE MEN, NOT FLOATING AROUND AT FIVE THOUSAND FEET WITH AN ICED DRINK IN MY HAND...

TWELVE MONTHS OF V.I.P. TREATMENT AND NOW HIS NEWS EDITOR'S CRITICISM HAD TURNED JERRY BELLAMY INTO A BITTER MAN. THAT NIGHT HE REACHED THE END OF HIS TETHER...

THEY'RE GIVING LONDON A PROPER BASHING TONIGHT, SIR...

STOP THE CAR DRIVER... QUICKLY!



THE BOMB WAS THE FIRST OF TWO THINGS WHICH DROVE JERRY BELLAMY TO REVOLT. IT FELL A HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE STAFF CAR WHICH WAS TAKING HIM TO THE WAR OFFICE ...

HEY... MISTER BELLAMY... COME BACK...

THERE ARE PEOPLE TRAPPED OVER THERE... I'M DARNED IF I'M JUST DRIVING PAST, WAR OFFICE CONFERENCE OR NOT...



THEY WERE LEADING AN OLD LADY OUT OF THE RUINS OF HER HOME. SHE KEPT PULLING BACK, CRYING. JERRY SAW WHAT SHE WANTED ...

TAKE IT EASY, MISSUS ...

PLEASE ... MY JOHNNY'S PHOTO ... I CAN'T GO WITHOUT THAT...

ALL RIGHT, MA, I'LL GET IT FOR YOU...



THE PHOTOGRAPH BEHIND THE CRACKED GLASS SHOWED A YOUNG SOLDIER, SOLEMN IN HIS STIFF NEW BATTLEDRESS ...

HE'S NO HERO, SIR... JUST AN ORDINARY BOY... BUT HE'S MY SON ...



SUDDENLY, LOOKING AT THAT PHOTOGRAPH, JERRY SAW WHAT HAD GONE WRONG WITH HIS STORIES IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS ...



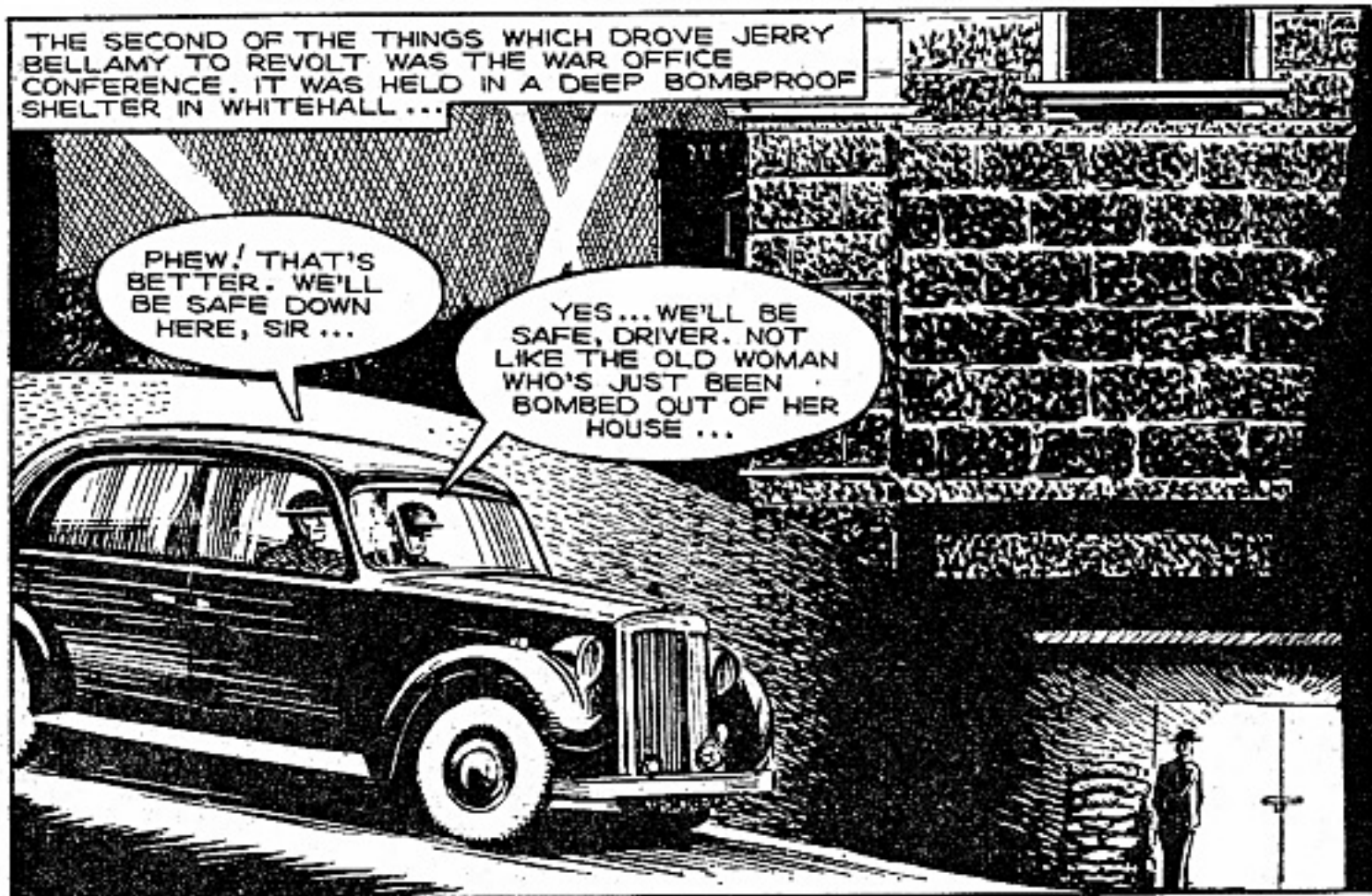
THAT'S WHAT I OUGHT TO BE WRITING ABOUT... NOT THE TOP-LEVEL STUFF, BUT THE ORDINARY KIDS WHO ARE DOING THEIR BIT...

COME ALONG, PLEASE, MISTER BELLAMY... YOU'LL BE LATE FOR THE CONFERENCE...

THE SECOND OF THE THINGS WHICH DROVE JERRY BELLAMY TO REVOLT WAS THE WAR OFFICE CONFERENCE. IT WAS HELD IN A DEEP BOMBPROOF SHELTER IN WHITEHALL ...

PHEW! THAT'S BETTER. WE'LL BE SAFE DOWN HERE, SIR ...

YES... WE'LL BE SAFE, DRIVER. NOT LIKE THE OLD WOMAN WHO'S JUST BEEN BOMBED OUT OF HER HOUSE ...





THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN CALLED TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR A NEW OFFENSIVE BY THE EIGHTH ARMY IN ITALY...

NOW, GENTLEMEN, THE SUCCESS OF THE WHOLE ATTACK ON THE GUSTAV LINE DEPENDS ON OUR TAKING THIS BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER GARIGLIANO...

QUITE, SIR. IF THE GERMANS SUCCEED IN CUTTING THAT, OUR CENTRE AND LEFT FLANK COULD BE LEFT HANGING IN THE AIR....

WE'VE ALREADY STARTED, MISTER BELLAMY...



THE CONFERENCE WAS LIKE FIFTY OTHERS THAT JERRY HAD ATTENDED IN THE LAST YEAR. BUT THIS TIME, THE UNIT MARKED DOWN TO SPEARHEAD THE ATTACK WAS WELL KNOWN TO JERRY...

WHICHEVER UNIT ATTACKS THAT BRIDGE WILL PROBABLY BE CUT TO PIECES IN THE PROCESS...

YES, SIR. THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED. I THINK WE'LL NEED VETERANS FOR THE JOB. I SUGGEST THE RAYNSHIRE...

**THE RAYNSHIRE!**



THE PIN THE GENERAL STUCK INTO THE MAP REPRESENTED THE REGIMENT JERRY BELLAMY HAD LIVED WITH, FOUGHT BESIDE FOR SO MANY MONTHS...



NEXT MORNING, FIVE MILLION READERS KNEW WHY JERRY BELLAMY HAD REVOLTED AGAINST THE LUXURY AND SAFETY WHICH SUCCESS HAD BROUGHT HIM...





# Chapter 5. The Firing Line

JERRY BELLAMY KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING. BEFORE HIS LATEST STORY HAD APPEARED, HE HAD ALREADY TAKEN THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO THE FIRING LINE...

WE CAN GIVE HIM A LIFT TO NAPLES... HE'S ONLY A LITTLE CHAP... AND HIS TYPEWRITER WON'T ADD MUCH TO THE PAYLOAD...

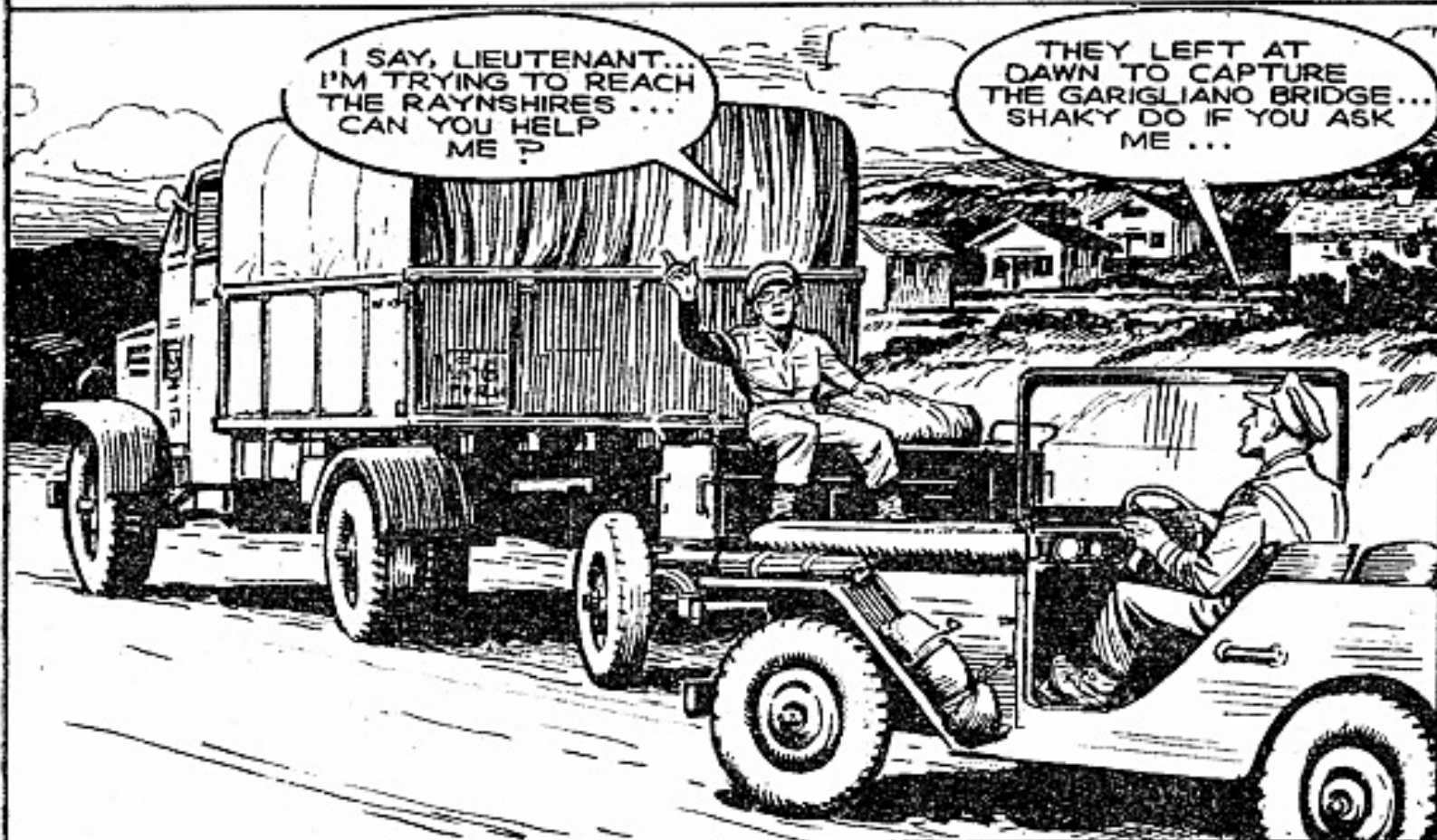
AND HIS NAME'S BELLAMY. OKAY, SKIPPER... I'LL TELL HIM WE'LL BE PROUD TO TAKE HIM.

FROM NAPLES, JERRY GOT A LIFT NORTH ON A R.E.M.E. TRUCK, AS FAR AS VOLTURNO.

BLIMEY... THE LITTLE BLOKE'S HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, AIN'T HE?

NO, MATE... I'VE SEEN HIS PHOTO IN THE PAPERS... THAT'S JERRY BELLAMY, THAT IS. HE'S OFF TO THE FRONT LINE...

FROM THERE, JERRY HITCHED A LIFT ON A GUN LIMBER. TEN MILES SHORT OF THE FRONT LINE, JERRY HAILED A PASSING JEEP...



AN HOUR LATER, THE JEEP SLOWED ON THE HIGH RIDGE OVERLOOKING THE GARIGLIANO VALLEY. THE GUNFIRE WAS ROLLING ACROSS THE RIVER LIKE THUNDER...





THE RAYNSHIRE WERE IN THE THICK OF IT. THE VICIOUS SHELLING HAD PINNED THEM DOWN FIVE HUNDRED YARDS SHORT OF THE BRIDGE. COLONEL ROWLAND HAD BEEN WOUNDED AND MIKE RICHARDS, NOW A MAJOR, HAD TAKEN COMMAND ...



WE NEED SUPPORT...  
WITHOUT IT, WE'LL  
NEVER MAKE THAT  
BRIDGE ...

SIR! LOOK...  
AM I SEEING  
THINGS, OR IS  
THAT...?

SHAKEN, DEAFENED AND DISHEARTENED, THE RAYNSHIRE LOOKED BACK TO THE SHELLTORN SLOPE BEHIND THEM. A SMALL FIGURE WAS MAKING ITS WAY DOGGEDLY TOWARDS THEM, CARRYING A TYPEWRITER ...



GOOD GRIEF...  
IT'S JERRY  
BELLAMY!

THE RAYNSHIRE'S HAD NOT FORGOTTEN JERRY BELLAMY. THE SHELLS WERE STILL SLAMMING DOWN AROUND THEM, BUT THE MEN GOT UP GRINNING AS THE HEAVILY LADEN FIGURE PASSED THEM...

YOU'RE JUST THE BLOKE WE WANTED TO SEE, JERRY!

GOOD OLD JERRY!

STAYING WITH US THIS TIME, JERRY?

YES, CHAPS... THIS IS WHERE I BELONG!

MIKE RICHARDS SHOOK JERRY'S HAND, GRINNING. THERE WAS NO NEED FOR HIM TO SHOUT THE ORDER. HIS MEN WERE ALREADY ON THEIR FEET...

I WAS HOPING AGAINST HOPE WE'D GET SOME SUPPORT, JERRY... NOW WE'VE GOT IT!

NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MIKE. THIS TIME NO-ONE'S GOIN' TO YANK ME BACK HOME... I'M SEEING IT THROUGH WITH THE RAYNSHIRE'S!



FIVE SECONDS LATER, WHEN THE MAJOR WAVED THEM FORWARD, THE RAYNSHIRE ROSE AS ONE MAN, CHEERING...

RIGHT, MEN...  
**FORWARD!**



THAT RUSH CARRIED THE RAYNSHIRE TO WITHIN FIFTY YARDS OF THE BRIDGE BEFORE THE GERMAN GUNS COULD SHORTEN THEIR RANGE. A SERGEANT RAN FORWARD THEN TO KNOCK OUT THE SPANDAU...

DONNERWETTER!  
THESE ARE  
DEVILS!

AAAAGH!



BUT THE RAYNSHIRE'S WERE NOT DEVILS. THEY WERE ORDINARY MEN WITH A JOB TO DO AND THE WILLPOWER TO DO IT, LIKE THE DYING SERGEANT JERRY BELLAMY KNELT BESIDE NOW...

THEY'VE REACHED THE GERMAN POSITION, SERGEANT... THAT SPANDAU WOULD HAVE MOWN THEM DOWN IF YOU HADN'T KNOCKED IT OUT.

AYE... WELL, THAT'S WHAT I WEAR MY STRIPES FOR, JERRY... TELL THE LADS GOOD LUCK FOR ME...

A FINAL BAYONET CHARGE CARRIED THE GERMAN EMPLACEMENT ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE BRIDGE. THE RAYNSHIRE'S CONSOLIDATED...

THE R.A.F. WILL BE CLOBBERING THOSE GERMAN BATTERIES IN THE HILLS AT DAWN, MEN. WE'LL ONLY BE UP AGAINST INFANTRY COUNTER-ATTACK, AND WE CAN DEAL WITH THAT...

MORTAR CREWS, FORWARD... WHERE'S THE MACHINE-GUN SECTION... GET BUSY, MEN!



EACH MAN SET ABOUT HIS TASK IN THE CAPTURED POSITION AS DARKNESS FELL. AND JERRY BELLAMY HAD HIS OWN SPECIAL JOB TO DO...

TWO DAYS AGO IN WHITEHALL, I SAW A GENERAL STICK A PIN IN A MAP. TODAY I SAW A GROUP OF ORDINARY MEN SLOG FORWARD THROUGH SHELLFIRE, WITH SPANDAU BULLETS RIPPING AT THEIR BODIES, SO THAT THAT PIN COULD STAY WHERE IT WAS, AN ENEMY POSITION CAPTURED...

DAWN CAME. THE GERMANS IN THE HILLS ACROSS THE VALLEY STOOD TO THEIR GUNS. THE SKY WAS CLEAR AND NO R.A.F. BOMBERS CAME...

ACHTUNG! WE SHALL LAY A BARRAGE ON THE BRIDGE IN ADVANCE OF OUR COUNTER-ATTACK...

THE BRIDGE IS CLEAR, HERR MAJOR... ALL GUNS CONCENTRATE... RAPID FIRE...

THE ENEMY GUNS OPENED UP, RANGING QUICKLY ON THE CAPTURED BRIDGE EMPLACEMENTS. THE RAYNSHIRE'S BEGAN TO DIE, HELPLESSLY...



THIS IS MURDEROUS!  
WHAT THE DEVIL'S  
HAPPENED TO THE  
AIR STRIKE?

HANG ON,  
MEN... MAYBE  
THE R.A.F. BOYS  
WILL COME...

BUT THE R.A.F. DID NOT COME.  
WITH HALF HIS MEN KILLED  
OR WOUNDED BY THAT SAVAGE  
BARRAGE, MAJOR RICHARDS  
MADE THE ONLY POSSIBLE  
DECISION...

WE'LL HAVE TO WITHDRAW,  
SERGEANT. IT'LL MEAN  
RETAKE THE BRIDGE LATER.  
BUT IF WE STAY HERE  
THERE'LL BE NONE OF US  
LEFT TO FIGHT!

WITHDRAW, MEN!  
TAKE WHAT  
WEAPONS YOU  
CAN!





JERRY BELLAMY WITHDREW WITH THE RAYNSHIRE. HE WAS THIRTY YARDS FROM THE BRIDGE WHEN HE HEARD A YOUNG SOLDIER SHOUTING BEHIND HIM...

HELP--DON'T LEAVE ME, MATES! I'VE BEEN HIT IN THE LEGS--

WHAT THE---

KEEP GOING, JERRY--THE GERMAN INFANTRY IS ON OUR HEELS!



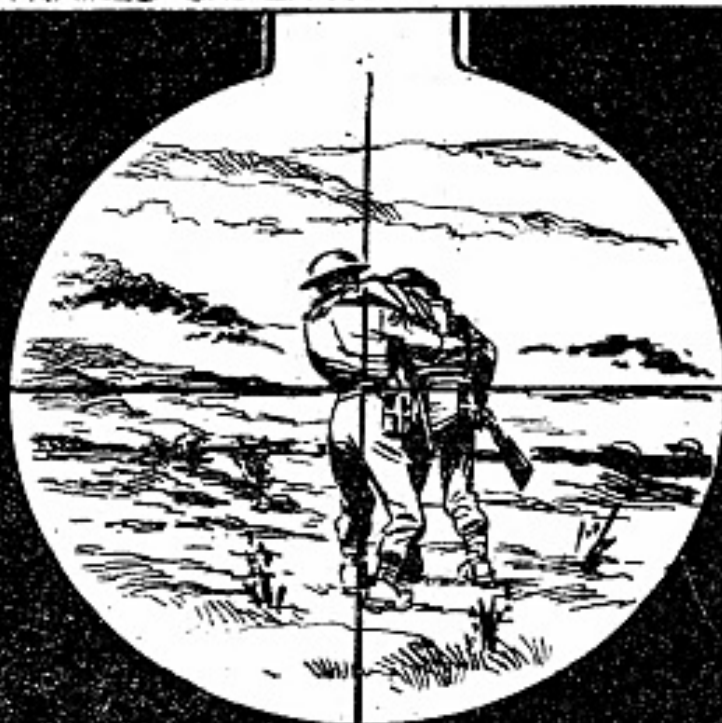
JERRY BELLAMY RAN BACK TOWARDS THE BRIDGE. RIFLE BULLETS WERE PECKING THE DUST WHEN HE REACHED THE HELPLESS BOY. THE GERMANS WERE CLOSING FAST...

HECK...I'M SORRY, JERRY! I SHOULDN'T HAVE GOT YOU INTO THIS...

THAT'S OKAY, KID... I COULDN'T LEAVE YOU ON YOUR OWN. HANG ON TO ME...



THE GERMANS HAD REACHED THE BRIDGE NOW. MOST OF THEM FIRED WILDLY OVER OPEN SIGHTS AT THE TWO ENGLISHMEN STUMBLING BACK TO THE GULLY. BUT ONE WAS A TRAINED SNIPER...



THE SNIPER GOT JERRY BELLAMY IN THE BACK JUST AS HE WAS HELPING THE WOUNDED YOUNGSTER DOWN INTO THE SHELTER OF THE GULLY...

ALL RIGHT, KID? GOOD...  
OH... OH...

JERRY...  
GOOD GRIEF,  
JERRY!



THEY LOWERED JERRY INTO THE GULLY...

IT'S - OKAY, MIKE -  
A LOT - OF GOOD  
MEN - HAVE DIED -  
AND I ALWAYS  
WANTED - TO BE  
ONE OF THEM....





WHEN MAJOR RICHARDS STOOD UP, STIFFLY, THE MEN AROUND HIM TOOK OFF THEIR HELMETS. THEY HAD NO GIFT FOR WORDS, BUT THE GESTURE WAS ENOUGH...

HE'S GONE, MEN...

SIR... ME AND THREE OTHERS... WE'LL GO BACK WITH HIS BODY, SIR, IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU...

THEY CARRIED THE BODY OF JERRY BELLAMY BACK THROUGH THE LINES OF SILENT MEN, BAREHEADED EVEN THOUGH THE SHELLS WERE STILL FALLING...



IT WAS THE REGIMENTAL SERGEANT-MAJOR WHO BROKE THE RAYNSHIRE'S SILENCE. THERE WAS A SUDDEN DEEP ANGER IN HIS VOICE ...

THEY KILLED JERRY BELLAMY, MEN... SO HELP ME, ARE WE GOING TO LET THEM GET AWAY WITH THAT?



THE RAYNSHIRE'S SURGED BACK TOWARDS THE BRIDGE THEN. THEIR ANGER WAS AS COLD AND HARD AND BRIGHT AS THEIR BAYONETS ...

NO - BY HEAVENS!

GET THE DEVILS!

UP THE RAYNSHIRE'S!





JERRY BELLAMY HAD LOVED THIS REGIMENT AND THE REGIMENT HAD GROWN TO LOVE HIM IN RETURN. HIS MEMORY INSPIRED THE MEN NOW, AS HIS LIVING PRESENCE HAD ONCE DONE ...



THAT VICIOUS COUNTER-ATTACK HAD TAKEN THE GERMANS COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE. AS THEY RAN, A SQUADRON OF R.A.F. FIGHTER BOMBERS BLAZED OUT OF THE SUN TO STRIKE AT THE ENEMY BATTERIES IN THE HILLS ...



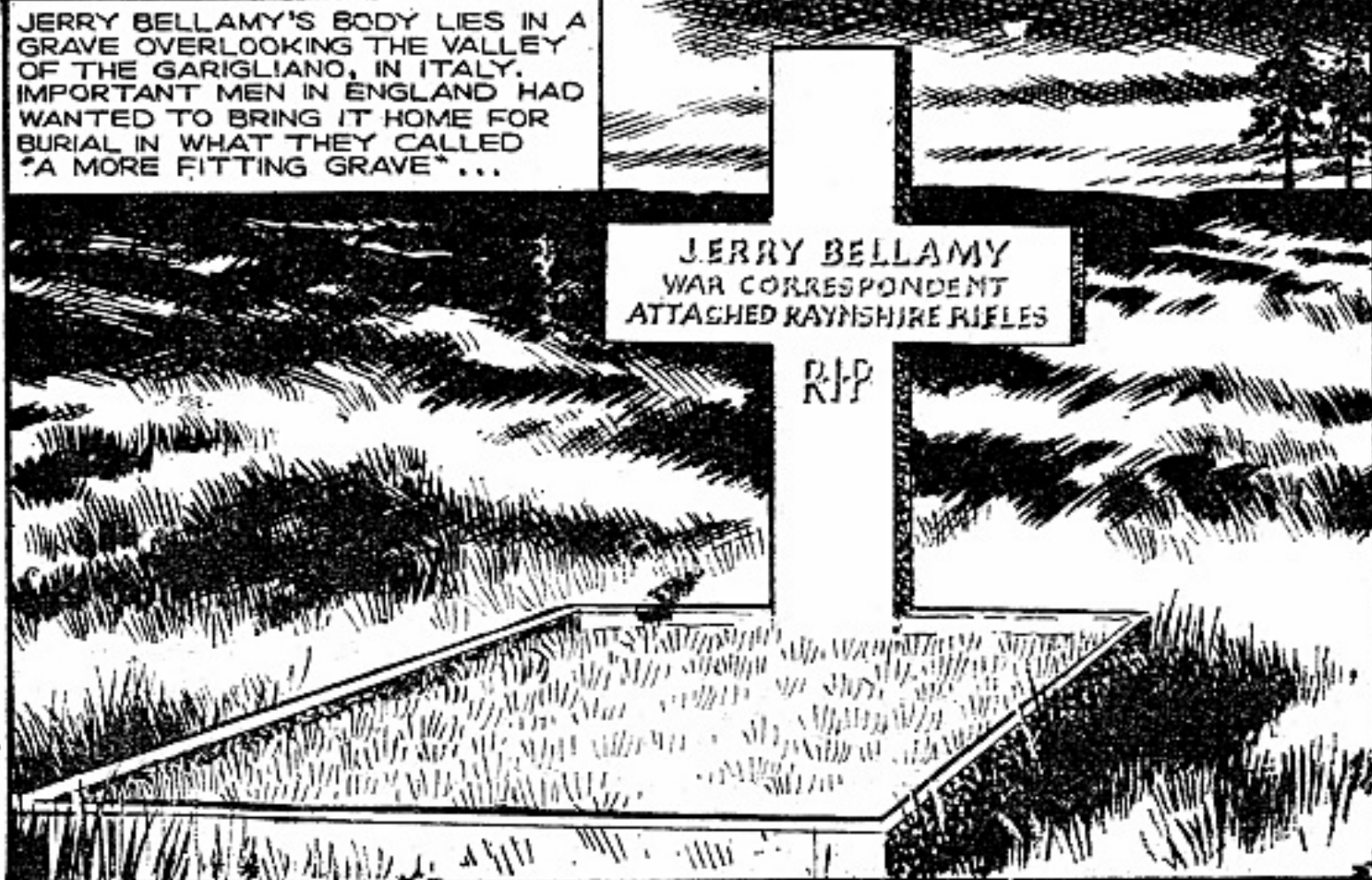
THEY FOUND JERRY BELLAMY'S TYPEWRITER IN THE SHELL-TORN RUINS OF THE BRIDGE EMPLACEMENT ...



TODAY, THAT BATTERED TYPEWRITER STANDS IN THE REGIMENTAL MESS OF THE RAYNSHIRE RIFLES ...

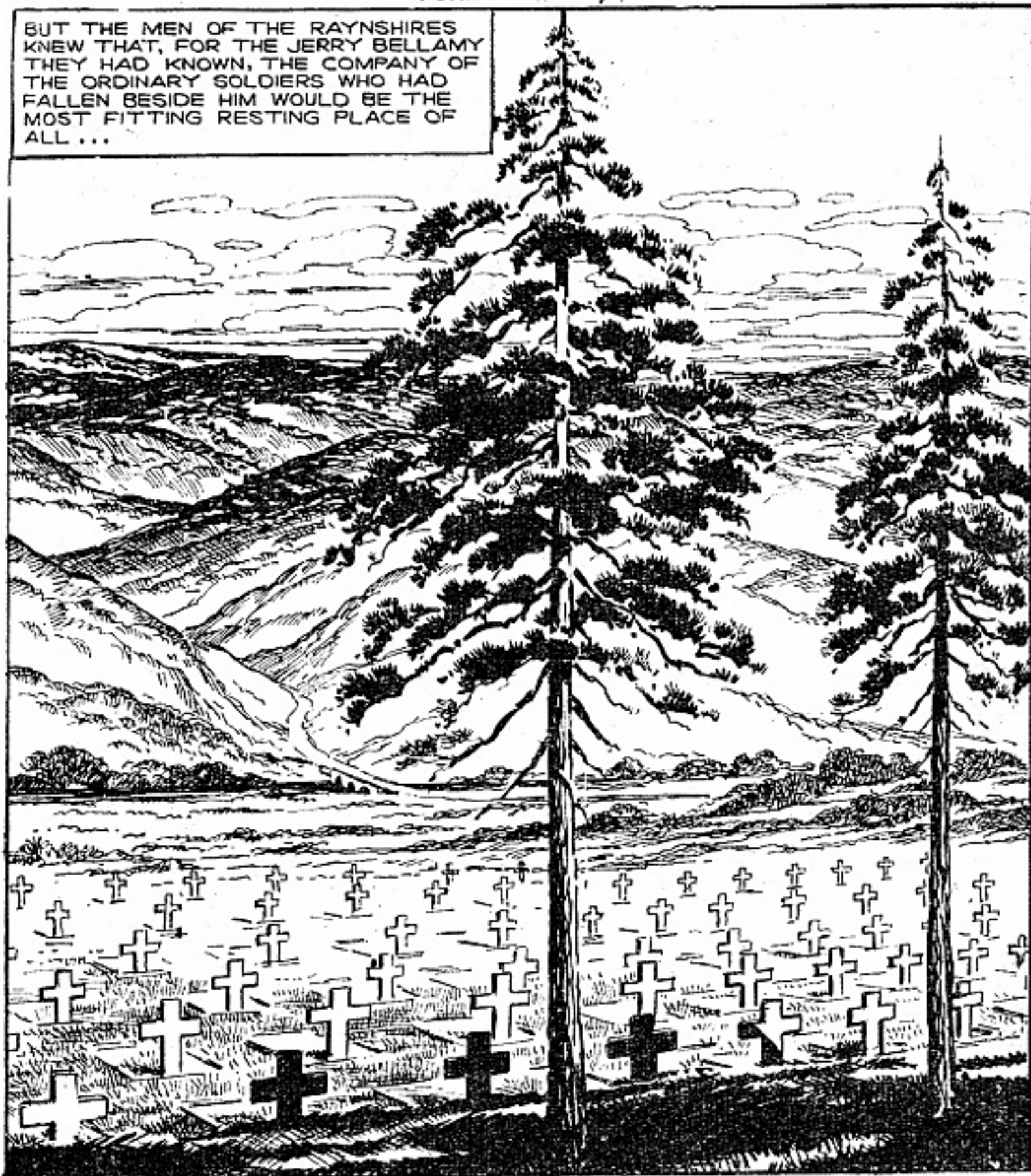


JERRY BELLAMY'S BODY LIES IN A GRAVE OVERLOOKING THE VALLEY OF THE GARIGLIANO, IN ITALY. IMPORTANT MEN IN ENGLAND HAD WANTED TO BRING IT HOME FOR BURIAL IN WHAT THEY CALLED "A MORE FITTING GRAVE" ...





BUT THE MEN OF THE RAYNSHIRE KNEW THAT, FOR THE JERRY BELLAMY THEY HAD KNOWN, THE COMPANY OF THE ORDINARY SOLDIERS WHO HAD FALLEN BESIDE HIM WOULD BE THE MOST FITTING RESTING PLACE OF ALL ...



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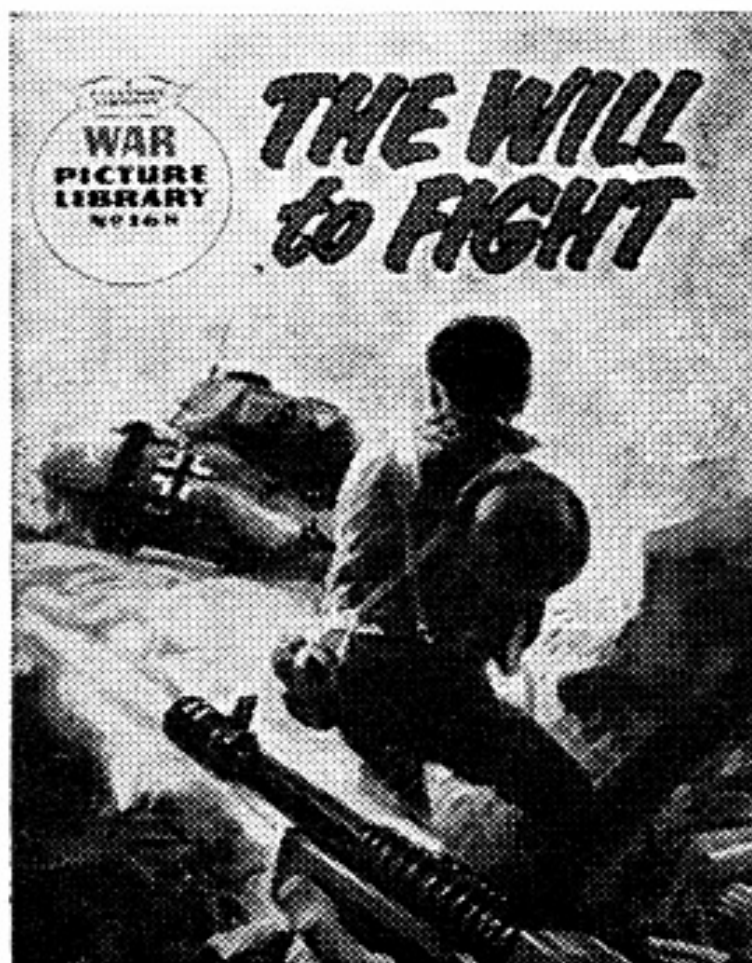
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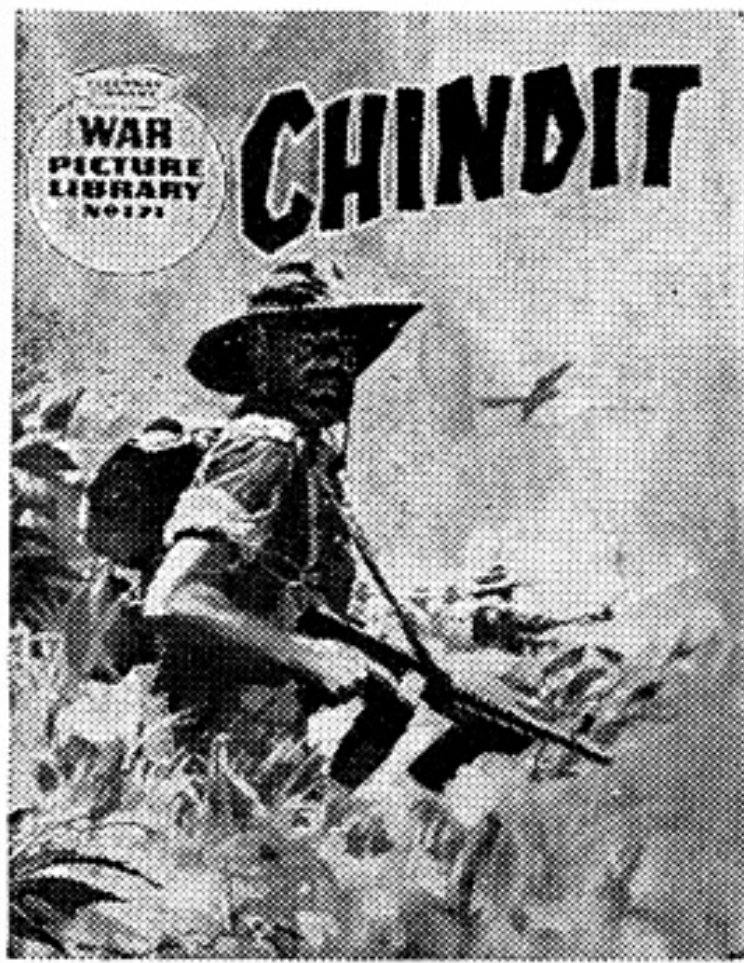
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